

## **Small Group Guide: The Good Shepherd vs. False Shepherds**

### **Key Takeaways:**

1. There are three options for who can be our shepherd: fallible humans, ourselves, or God.
2. False shepherds (both political/social leaders and religious leaders) often abuse and mislead the flock.
3. God promises to judge false shepherds and care for His sheep.
4. Being part of God's flock requires genuine faith and obedience, not just empty professions.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. The sermon mentions three types of shepherds: fallible humans, ourselves, and God. Have you ever found yourself trusting in human leaders or institutions more than God? Share your experience.
2. How have you seen or experienced the abuse or misguidance of false shepherds in your life or in society?
3. The sermon discusses how some people become "spiritual but not religious" due to hurt from religious institutions. How can we address this issue and show the difference between flawed human shepherds and the perfect Good Shepherd?
4. Read Ezekiel 34:11-16. How does God's description of His care for His sheep contrast with the actions of false shepherds? How have you experienced God's care in your own life?
5. The sermon emphasizes that being part of God's flock requires more than just claiming to be a Christian. How can we ensure our faith is genuine and not just an empty profession?
6. Discuss the statement: "Good works don't earn our salvation, but they evidence it." How does this play out in your daily life?

### **Practical Applications:**

1. Self-reflection: Take time this week to examine your life. Are there areas where you're trusting in false shepherds (human institutions, yourself) more than God? Make a plan to redirect that trust to God.
2. Scripture study: Read through Psalm 23 daily this week, meditating on how God shepherds you personally.
3. Community care: Identify someone in your church or community who may have been hurt by false shepherds. Reach out to them with compassion and point them to the goodness of the true Shepherd.
4. Obedience challenge: Choose one area of your life where you struggle to obey God. Commit to following His guidance in that area this week, relying on His strength.
5. Gratitude journal: Each day, write down one way you've experienced God's shepherding care. Share these with the group next week.
6. Prayer focus: Spend time in prayer for those who have been scattered or hurt by false shepherds, asking God to draw them back to His flock.